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Items for information: Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

Report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report of the Group.

Report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

1. The present report summarizes the activities of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation on the measurement of working time during 2004 and 2005. The sixth meeting of the Paris Group was held in Lisbon from 29 September to 1 October 2004 to further work on the development of international guidelines and recommendations on working time and to hold initial discussions on topics related to the ageing labour force.

2. A report of the Lisbon meeting, summarizing discussions and recommendations, was submitted to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session in March 2005 as a background document. As mentioned in previous reports to the Commission, work of the Paris Group on working-time measurement is being undertaken to assist the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the development of a resolution on working time for the next International Conference of Labour Statisticians, tentatively scheduled for 2008.

* E/CN.3/2006/1.
** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24), chap. I.B.

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3. Further work on both working-time measurement and on the ageing labour force will be undertaken in the context of the seventh meeting of the Paris Group scheduled to be held from 15 to 17 May 2006 in Budapest.

Sixth meeting of the Paris Group

4. The main topic of discussion at the Lisbon meeting was the development of international statistical standards for the measurement of working time. National papers prepared for the 2004 meeting, and for the meeting held in London in 2003, focused on current national experiences in this area and the identification of a number of key problem issues. These discussions were a prelude to the revision and enhancement of the key existing international standard on working-time statistics, namely, the 1962 resolution of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. The revised resolution will be designed to address a variety of uses of working-time statistics such as labour-input and labour-market analysis, covering both conceptual issues and practical measurement-related problems.

5. The report of the Lisbon meeting (available from http://www.insee.fr/en/nom_def_met/colloques/citygroup/citygroup.htm) summarizes the discussions and recommendations of the Paris Group for future work on working-time measurement and outlines a number of problem areas and issues requiring further consideration.

Paris Group input to the update of the System of National Accounts (SNA)

6. During discussions at both the 2003 and 2004 meetings of the Paris Group, labour-force statisticians pointed to a number of grey areas in the 1993 SNA[1] (in particular in chap. XVII on population and labour inputs) in the context of working-time measurement which would benefit, they believed, from clarification and revision during the current SNA update. National agencies that had attended the 2004 Group meeting were requested to identify specific problem areas in the SNA. A synthesis of national comments received was forwarded to the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts in November 2005. Discussions with the Expert Group are under way to ensure that the revised resolution is consistent with the SNA update.

Future work: seventh meeting of the Paris Group

7. The seventh meeting of the Paris Group, which, as noted above, will be held from 15 to 17 May 2006 in Budapest, will be hosted by the Hungarian Central Statistics Office. Just over two days of the meeting will be devoted to reviewing a draft resolution of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians on working-time measurement, with substantive discussion on remaining problem areas as outlined in the report of the Lisbon meeting. Part of the third day of the meeting will be devoted to further work on the subject of the ageing labour force (see paras. 10-11 below). Invitations for this meeting have been issued to national agencies around the globe, representing both developed and developing statistical systems.

8. As with other city groups, the condition for attendance is prior submission of a brief paper (six pages maximum) on issues relevant to the draft resolution. The draft resolution, which will be forwarded to participants on 28 February 2006, will clearly be the focus of discussion in May 2006 including its remaining problem areas. The meeting organizers have requested authors of national papers to restrict the content of their papers to their views on specific aspects of the text of the draft resolution and to problem areas identified by the meeting organizers. Obviously, national papers would utilize their relevant national experience in dealing with the issues identified.

9. The outcome of the Budapest meeting in the context of working time will be a further draft of the resolution on working time which will be one of the inputs to an ILO tripartite meeting in 2007, to be held prior to the 2008 International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

Paris Group work on the ageing labour force

10. As mentioned above, part of the third day of the May 2006 Paris Group meeting will be devoted to discussion on one or more of the following specific issues related to the ageing labour force that were identified by national delegates at the 2004 plenary meeting:

- Labour utilization/underutilization and the potential labour supply among the economically inactive, including barriers and incentives, integration of younger workers, retention of older workers, training of mature workers, etc.
- Impact of population structure on indicators: recommendations on the standardization of key ageing-related concepts and measures that would facilitate international comparisons.
- Projections, including average age, age dependency ratios, links to economic projections.
- Patterns of retirement: average age, rate of retirement, reason (choice/obligation), phased, retirement intentions, recommendations on common terminology.
- Measurement: use of a variety of sources, ongoing/ad hoc longitudinal studies that follow people over time.

11. National participants at the meeting have been asked if they would be willing to prepare a brief paper outlining their perspectives and experiences on any of these issues for discussion in May 2006, remembering that the discussions in Budapest would constitute only an initial foray.

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4.